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Our vistas are our one inimitable asset and we are blowing them in a numbers game of building blocks instead of thinking in terms of open space, green belts and just plain room to move about in. When the last building blocks the final view, where then shall we look for the soul of the city?



A CITY is people, little shops, a corner grocery, a lunch counter, a bar, a shoeshine stand, a Chinese laundry — the kind of places that are wiped out to make room for the soulless monsters. Who wants a city that only looks striking from a distant promontory? What makes a city beautiful is the life that throbs in a thousand small ways at its heart — that is the heart of the matter.



Preliminary Report No. 3

# GOALS OBJECTIVES POLICIES



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San Francisco Department of City Planning  
1969

THE PREPARATION OF THIS MAP WAS FINANCED  
IN PART THROUGH AN URBAN PLANNING GRANT  
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SEC. 701  
OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED

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HERB CAEN  
*San Francisco Chronicle*  
January 4, 1970

Preliminary Report No. 3

# **GOALS OBJECTIVES and POLICIES**

San Francisco Department of City Planning  
December 1969

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San Francisco urban  
design study  
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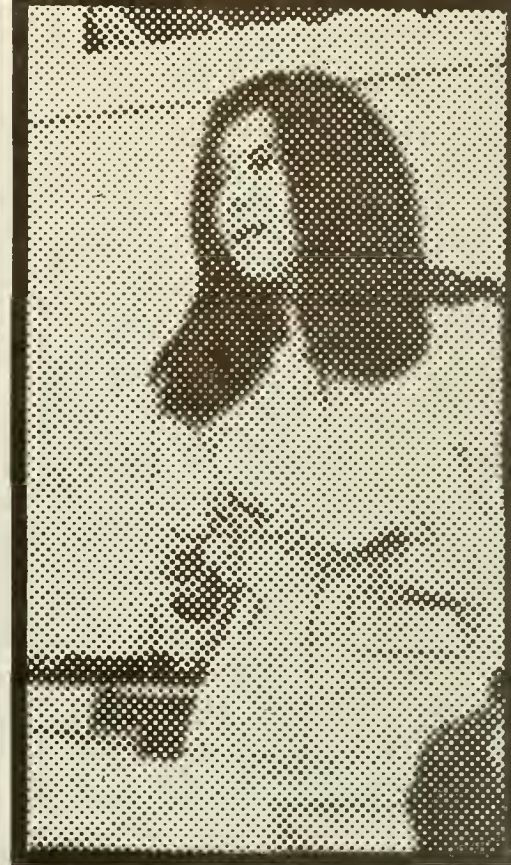
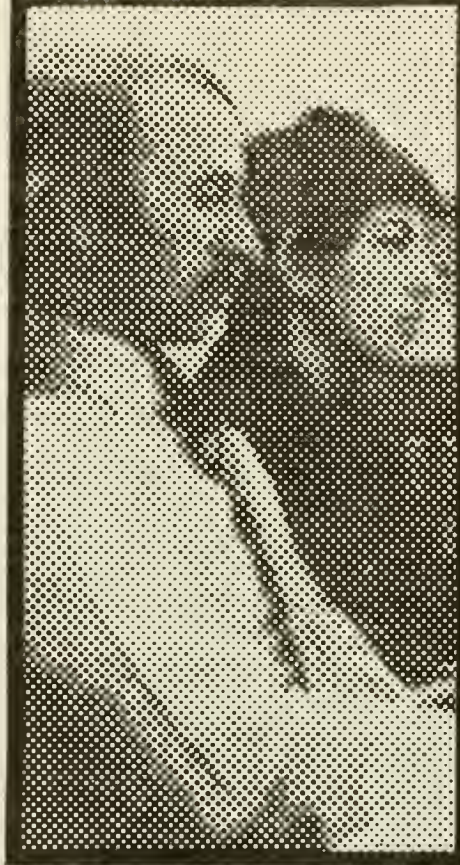
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URBAN DESIGN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES  
A PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

San Francisco has a magnificent physical setting, its hills, views, and waterfronts have made it a favored place among cities of the world. These environmental assets can no longer be taken for granted, and citizens must plan how to preserve them. Values must be perceived and concerns identified; then objectives and policies should be adopted which recognize the greatness of the City's potential and the urgency of its needs.

This report is a first step toward city-wide urban design goals and should provide a basic framework for the Urban Design Plan, now being prepared by the Department of City Planning. The plan when completed will include a revised and more specific statement of general city-wide policies which eventually will be included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. In addition, specific urban design proposals for one or two districts of the City will be prepared in some depth during the course of the project.

The Urban Design Plan will include recommendations on such elements as the desirable form, mass, and height of development for the various parts of the City, and specifically, for significant topographical features within the City. There will be recommendations for visual and recreational open spaces



which will identify current deficiencies as well as opportunities and establish criteria for improvement. Design treatment of City streets will be recommended. Specific policy statements will be developed on priorities for improving the quality of the physical environment in San Francisco's many communities.

These city-wide Goals, Objectives, and Policies are the product of much thoughtful discussion in monthly meetings of the Urban Design Advisory Committee. The Committee considered basic values and priorities for guiding the City's future physical growth, and offered many recommendations for this report.

The long history of San Francisco residents' involvement in public hearings on zoning cases and other issues affecting the way the City looks and works on their block, in their neighborhood, and for the City as a whole is expressive of their concern for their environment. The Department's experience drawn from public hearings on many City issues represents another major source of information.

Another source has been a number of surveys conducted as part of the Urban Design project to determine citizens' views toward the environment and to assess systematically certain physical factors important to urban design. The amount of information is extensive and has been reported in detail in other staff papers.

Information gathered from these surveys, from discussions with the Urban Design Advisory Committee, and from public hearings





on zoning and planning issues over the years, has provided essential background material for this phase of work on Goals, Objectives, and Policies for the Urban Design Plan of San Francisco.

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies in this report are preliminary and general in nature. In subsequent phases of work, more specific sub-policies will be developed. They will appear in the final Urban Design Study report. The reader is invited to assist in improving this statement of Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies by filling out a short questionnaire in the back of this report.



## I. BACKGROUND

San Francisco, like all cities, is changing every day. Decisions which induce these changes -- whether they are decisions on building locations, zoning, or transportation improvements -- have a major effect on the City's form. If San Francisco is to realize the potential of its unique resources -- hills, valleys, views, waterfronts -- daily decisions producing change must be guided through a comprehensive and integrated design plan and process.

The forces of change in San Francisco are complex and far reaching. They include such diverse factors as expansion of the financial district, construction generated by the increasing importance of tourism, varying social characteristics and population shifts, renewed activity around the waterfront, the expansion of transportation facilities, growing demand for more medical facilities, and the need for more housing. Many of these developments point to positive signs of change. On the other hand, deterioration of certain residential and commercial areas has an equally important though negative effect on the City's vitality. Changes of this nature constitute obstacles to the City's overall development, and must be given the same consideration as changes caused by growth.

### Major Physical Changes

Among the most dramatic physical changes in recent years is



The rapid expansion of office space in the central business district. It can be expected to make major imprints on the City's form and, without suitable public policies, undesirably expand the boundaries of the traditional central business district. Development is growing more intensely skyward in the area around California and Montgomery Streets. It is also clear that the Yerba Buena Redevelopment project will have major impact on extending the central business district to the south of Market Street. At the same time, the Golden Gateway project at the foot of Market and other proposed construction projects may push major building intensity to the east and north of the central business district.

Tourism, now one of three most important industries, continues to spark development throughout the City. This trend, encouraged by new commercial activities such as the Japanese Trade Center and the renovation of old factory buildings in the Northern Waterfront area, is furthered by plans for several major hotels. The rapid expansion of tourism reinforces the need to preserve and enhance those qualities that make San Francisco a special place to visit, including its unique physical character.

Increased activity around the City's famous waterfront will continue to make a major impact on the City's form. The Northern Waterfront area is now a prime residential and commercial center, and economic studies recommend relocating





much of the working port activities to the south of their present location. This move will make possible additional residential, commercial, and office development at certain key shoreline locations recommended in the City's Northern Waterfront Plan.

Major changes in the transportation system, generated by increasing volumes of people coming into the City and traveling within the City, are having great impact on the man-made physical form of San Francisco. The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system will stimulate radical changes along Market Street and through the Mission. The southern extension of the Embarcadero Freeway and the proposed India Basin Bridge will have an important effect on City appearance.

There are many other projects both large and small which, over the years, collectively will alter the City's appearance and form. The City is certain to change physically. Public projects alone will play a major role in selected areas. Aside from the Yerba Buena and Golden Gateway Projects, redevelopment activities have already or soon will modify the physical characteristics in the Western Addition, Diamond Heights, and Hunters Point. The City's Model Neighborhood Program, now in the planning stage in the South Bayshore and under consideration in the Mission District, undoubtedly will involve physical changes to increase services and improve the living environment in these communities.



Other public agencies whose programs will affect the future of the City's form include the San Francisco Housing Authority. It is currently authorized and plans to build several thousand new units. The Authority, to achieve social objectives, has adopted a policy of scattered locations for new housing, which will have a much different effect upon their surroundings from that of the more traditional large project on a single site.

The City's Capital Improvements Program includes a variety of projects which influence City form. Among them are street improvements, parks, schools, and other public buildings. Public and private efforts to plant trees along streets and underground utility wires are other programs contributing to change in San Francisco.

As noted earlier, deterioration can alter the City's form and environment as significantly as trends in growth can. Large areas of San Francisco, particularly south of Market Street, are experiencing economic and physical deterioration. Urban design plans and policies must recognize these forces of decay in certain parts of the City and set priorities for public improvements designed to slow or reverse the trend and to achieve, as far as possible, a greatly improved environmental quality.

Changes will take place on specific pieces of land throughout



the City. And in each instance certain characteristics, both natural and man-made, must be respected, worked with and enhanced if the special beauty and character of San Francisco is to be maintained. Height and massive bulk in the wrong place can clash with the existing scale of surrounding development and detract from the natural land forms. Too intensive development can block access to the waterfront or provide insufficient open space for residents. The traditional street facade that makes so many neighborhoods delightful and uniquely "San Francisco" can be lost through poorly conceived setbacks, parking lots, or other alterations in the building pattern. Distinctive features and characteristics that set San Francisco apart from other cities must be protected during inevitable physical changes that will occur in the coming years.

#### Social Concerns and People's Views

If recommendations in the City's urban design plan are to improve the quality of the living and working environment, they must be based on goals shaped in a major way by the attitudes and views of San Francisco residents.

Four surveys, recently conducted for the Department, were concerned with how people perceive certain aspects of their environment. People were asked about problems in their neighborhood, about how they use their streets, their parks, and other community facilities. The findings from these





surveys provide a useful guide to formulating design policy through determining the importance people placed on certain physical factors in the environment.

When people were asked, in these surveys, about their concerns, many stressed the importance of certain social and economic factors. For example, it is not surprising that an overriding concern of many low- and middle-income people is the high cost and adequacy of housing. Great concern, however, was also expressed with the physical living environment, a matter of major significance to formulation of urban design policy.

The surveys show considerable variety in the things people are concerned about from one part of the City to another and from one group of people to another. There is satisfaction with living environment among people who live in areas where the quality of environment is relatively high and who have a high enough income to give them considerable mobility. They are able to consider many parts of the City and region as their living environment and tended to express their satisfaction in city-wide terms -- the good climate, the variety of physical features, the variety of people and activities. When they talked about their block, many respondents were enthusiastic about the mixture of social types. "New people moving in", "friendly people", "a mixture of people" were all reasons given for liking their block. They like being



convenient to shopping and other facilities. They are aware of the physical features of their block as well and mentioned some things that could be done to improve the appearance -- plant more trees, more landscaping, underground utility wires, provide parks within walking distance, and control through-traffic.

The people who expressed general dissatisfaction with their living environment usually have good reason for it. They are those who feel trapped, through lack of income and mobility, in poor quality areas of the City, and their expressed concerns tended to be limited in scale to their block and immediate environment. They are very concerned, for example, with the dirt and litter on the streets, the lack of maintenance of the houses, and the lack of police protection.

In talking about their block, survey respondents express two general types of concerns: the limitations of existing public facilities and street spaces and the need for additional facilities. It is clear that heavy volumes of traffic, particularly through-traffic, drastically affect the life style of residential areas. People tend to withdraw from their use of the streets, sidewalks, and fronts of their homes. This places a particular hardship on the immobile: the poor, the young, and the old whose lives are centered on their block. One of the most serious limitations imposed by traffic is that small children can't safely get to recreation areas even a short distance away. And at the



same time, the sidewalks and streets themselves become unsafe as play areas. Adults and older people also tend to limit their social activities on the block because of the danger, noise, and overbearing presence of automobile traffic.

There is widespread concern, especially among apartment dwellers, over the lack of on-street parking on or near their block. Some residents resent the small amount of parking provided by new commercial and industrial activities which reduce the supply of parking spaces that residents can use.

People have many suggestions for upgrading the living environment. High on the list is the need for parks or small places to sit within walking distance of home. The inadequacy of yard space is widely expressed. Children need play spaces that are safe. Many adults feel that the City should provide places for them to get together, places to sit and relax. Many residents put considerable importance on the general upgrading of their block -- the maintenance of buildings and yards, the cleanliness and maintenance of streets and sidewalks, improved street lighting, more street trees and landscaping, and undergrounding of utility wires.

#### Relevance to Urban Design

This brief background statement is clearly not an exhaustive catalogue of physical and social changes at work in San



Francisco; nor is it a thorough summary of findings from the several surveys undertaken as part of the urban design project. The background statement is presented as a preface to Goals, Objectives, and Policies to suggest the range of factors involving change that are relevant to urban design.

It is quite clear from the information gathered in surveys during the first phase of staff work that the Urban Design Plan must recognize the basic concerns for safety, comfort, and physical orientation which permit people to get about the City. Moreover, the plan must realize the vast effect on people's lives caused by automobile traffic. It must seek ways to enhance urban beauty and variety, and take cognizance of the degree to which open spaces add to the well-being of San Franciscans. It must also seek ways to protect hills and views, and recognize the essentially public nature of the waterfront areas.

Perhaps of equal importance, the Urban Design Plan and all future planning activities must contribute to the achievement of a balance between preservation and new development, consistent with the goals the City sets for itself.

The second half of this report presents a preliminary statement of Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies, and, where appropriate at this time, suggested actions for achieving them.





## II. URBAN DESIGN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Four goals, a primary goal and three secondary goals, have been suggested as being fundamental to all plans and programs of the City. They establish the broad direction and concerns for San Francisco's Comprehensive Plan, including the Urban Design Plan.

Primary Goal: To expand opportunities for individual achievement and self-development, and to increase among all citizens a spirit of community, mutual respect, and cooperation.

Secondary Goals: (1) To increase opportunities for citizens' involvement in decisions affecting their lives and the future of their community.

(2) To improve the quality of the physical environment so that it is conducive to the satisfaction of human needs for health and safety, privacy, inspiration, and beauty.

(3) To strengthen the economy and provide increased job opportunities.

Within this hierarchy, the four urban design goals presented in this report are, in effect, sub-goals expanding upon and articulating Secondary Goal (2). The urban design goals delineate a broad area of concern for the Urban Design Study. The general objectives and policies under each goal focus



the application of the goal on specific areas of environmental concern. An interpretive paragraph follows each general policy to direct attention to implications for further work to make the policy operative.



*goal:*

*To provide a safe, clean, and  
comfortable environment  
for all citizens.*



URBAN DESIGN GOAL I: TO PROVIDE A SAFE, CLEAN, AND COMFORTABLE  
ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CITIZENS

*In this rapidly changing age and region, the need to feel safe and secure is accentuated. Yet, each day when we leave our homes we are confronted with a multitude of uncertainties and potential dangers. Large intersections with complex traffic movements, for example, can create a sense of uncertainty in both driver and pedestrian. How many times have we asked ourselves, "Am I supposed to drive there?" or "Will I be safe walking here?" Good design can contribute to making such situations more predictable and safe just as adequate lighting can make parks and streets secure at night. The auto is not only a major threat to safety, it is also a principal source of noise, air pollution and vibration -- irritants that take another kind of human toll. Because it is such an important factor in our daily lives, it warrants special concern and attention.*

*Without safety and comfort, the variety of opportunities and the beauty that the City may offer are of little value. They are basic human concerns essential to the enjoyment of other amenities. They are, therefore, primary goals of any effective urban design plan.*

Objective A. To make movement through the City dignified,  
and enjoyable.

Policies

1. Streets and public areas where people walk and wait should  
be well-lighted.

Adequate lighting is one of the most important factors in personal safety for people who walk or wait outside after dark. Sufficient lighting should be ensured in commercial areas and their fringes where people walk to parked cars; around bus and transit stops; parking lots; around apartment-house areas where people have to depend on street parking, which is often several blocks from home, and in and near parks and recreation areas that are used at night.

The current adequacy of City lighting should be evaluated by appropriate City departments, and areas deficient in lighting should be identified and compared with areas of street crime incidence. A comprehensive schedule for improved lighting in problem areas should be devised, included in the City's Capital Improvement Program, and undertaken where possible in conjunction with programs for street improvements and undergrounding of utilities.





2. Benches and shelters should be provided where needed for comfort and convenience of the public. First priority should be given to areas with the greatest user need.

This is one of the simplest and least costly improvements that would add to people's comfort. Benches could be provided not only at transit stops, but along shopping streets and in residential neighborhoods.

The cost of providing benches need not rest wholly with the City. Private business groups, neighborhood associations, and individuals can be encouraged, through an organized program, to supply and maintain benches in specially designated areas in the public right of way as well as on private property.

3. All circulation systems should be visually clear and predictable in their operation.

Automobile driver, transit driver and rider, and pedestrian alike should be able to tell what is ahead. It should be obvious to each what route to take. Confusion is often prevalent at points where different means of travel intersect each other without clear articulation. Jumbles of advertising signs, road signs, lights, and other street furniture are often causes for confusion and danger.

Accident-rate information maintained by the Police Department should be analyzed as to the type and cause of accidents. Problem spots should be identified and priority improvements incorporated in the Capital Improvement Program. Improvements designed to clarify circulation systems could be tested for effectiveness in special project areas, such as in Federally Assisted Code Enforcement areas (FACE). Experiments could be designed to test the degree to which each improvement clarifies the system and cuts down on accident rates.

Objective B. To preserve and enhance the safety, cleanliness, and comfort of residential environments.

#### Policies

1. Street and sidewalks and vacant lots should be well maintained and clear of litter and debris.



The quality of the environment in certain parts of the City can be greatly improved by intensified programs of street maintenance and cleaning, and by enforcing requirements that privately owned vacant lots are kept free of litter. The City might review street maintenance and street cleaning schedules in light of environmental quality ratings recently done by the Department of City Planning.

2. Major trafficways should not divide homogeneous communities.

This policy should be applied when designing street improvements to major thoroughfares. Streets designated to accommodate increased through-traffic could be evaluated partly on the effect the proposed improvement would have on communities. In addition, existing major streets could be evaluated to determine whether improvements can be made to reduce negative effects on adjacent communities.

3. Through-traffic should be discouraged on residential streets

When streets designed to carry heavy volumes of intercity and intracity through-traffic approach capacity and become congested, there is a tendency for drivers to use adjacent parallel streets, many of which run through residential areas. The consequence is usually a reduction of the desirability and livability of such streets. If San Francisco is to compete effectively with the suburbs as a desirable place to live, maintaining high standards in the residential environment is essential. High priority should be given to actions which protect residential areas from the intrusion of excessive through traffic.

When the number of cars reaches a predetermined level, changes should be made that will discourage through-traffic movement, such as installing stop signs, changing timing of traffic signals, and restricting movement at intersections. Simultaneously, ways should be sought to increase the traffic capacity of the major thoroughfares. However, protection of residential areas must not be contingent on such improvements and should receive at least as high priority as the provision of new, high-capacity thoroughfares.

Project priorities for street changes in the Capital Improvement Program should consider the degree to which each project contributes to implementing this policy.



4. Residential areas or other areas with high concentrations of people should be adequately protected from heavily used trafficways generating irritating levels of noise, vibration, and pollution.

Many major trafficways in the City run through residential areas or through areas where there are high concentrations of people. Residential areas can be protected from the adverse effect of heavy traffic volumes by the development of heavily planted landscaped buffer areas between the residential frontage and traffic, by the creation of frontage roads separating heavy fast traffic from local access, and by other measures that screen and separate traffic from houses.

This policy will most likely be achieved on an incremental basis; that is, a project to widen a street to accommodate more traffic could include provisions for protecting adjoining uses from the effects of the traffic. The City could identify these problem areas in the existing system and consider methods for resolving conflicts between heavy auto use and concentrations of people.







*Goal:*

*To provide a basis for  
individual  
orientation within the city.*





URBAN DESIGN GOAL II: TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR INDIVIDUAL  
ORIENTATION WITHIN THE CITY

*The importance of distinctive character and visual structure is more easily understood if we imagine a city in which every block and street are identical, repeating itself mile after mile. The first thought that occurs is how easy it would be to become lost. We would have no means to tell where we were; if asked directions, we might be hard pressed to describe how to get to any part. The degree we depend upon landmarks and special features -- "turn right at the old church and continue to the divided road with the palm trees in the middle" -- is not often realized. There would, of course, in such a city be little reason to go from one place to another.*

*The hills and valleys are the source of much of the visual structure and special character of San Francisco, dividing parts of the City into distinct areas or communities. In this San Francisco is more fortunate than most other cities. Yet, there are large areas within the City that are confusing to residents as well as visitors.*

Objective A. To strengthen the City's visual structure.

Policies

1. The form of strong natural elements which provide orientation should be preserved and emphasized.

The hills, valleys, and waterfront areas of San Francisco provide a basic visual structure which helps the individual know where he is in the City. Any new development should enhance or emphasize these natural forms. In general, height should be developed on hilltops, and restricted on the slopes and in the valleys. The waterfront should be visible from many points in the City (see Policy IV, B, 3).

Specific form development policies for each of the major hills will be proposed in the Urban Design Plan.

2. All strong orienting features -- buildings, entrance points, special areas, landmarks -- should be preserved.

Man-made as well as natural forms provide orientation. Any strong forms, especially those which are architecturally or historically significant, should be preserved.

Areas which have a distinctive building form might be designated for special treatment, including a review of building



and demolition permits in order to maintain the unique character of an area.

3. Circulation systems should be designed and signed to distinguish clearly between intercity routes, intracity routes, local shopping streets, and residential streets.

This policy implies the need to extend the City's trafficways plan to designate streets based on their function. With functional designations, prototypes could be designed by each type of street, using criteria for safety, clarity, buffering, and discouraging through-traffic.

Designs would include coordination of street furniture, design of lighting, signs, signals, tree forms, as well as the width of pavement for moving traffic, parking, sidewalks, planter strips, and provisions for protecting adjacent uses from effects of heavy traffic. Areas in the City where the street system hierarchy is now unclear should be identified, specific solutions proposed, and priorities given to physical changes which would help clarify the street function with the city-wide system.

Objective B. To strengthen the distinctiveness and visual order of the City's districts.

#### Policies

1. Features which enhance the distinctive quality and sense of unique identity in each district should be preserved and enhanced wherever possible.

Certain natural and man-made features provide distinctiveness to local areas even though they are not significant on a city-wide scale.

These features can be identified in each district. Depending on their nature, action might be taken by local groups in cooperation with the City, by the Landmarks Preservation Board, or by other agencies, to preserve and enhance physical features which give special character to local areas.

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2. Circulation systems, major building forms, and open spaces within each district should be designed and located in a logical order so that the routes to centers of activity are visually clear.

Shopping areas, community facilities, educational and recreational centers of community activity attracting many people should be visually evident through distinctive building form, landscaping and street lighting, and special signing. The streets leading to these centers should visually direct the individual to central destinations.

Specific design policies can be developed for each district and implemented by local business groups, in cooperation with the City, through a special street design program, revisions to the Planning Code, and location of major community facilities. Special attention is needed in areas currently without a high degree of visual character.

3. Buildings and areas of historic and cultural value should be preserved in an appropriate context to maintain a sense of continuity with the past.

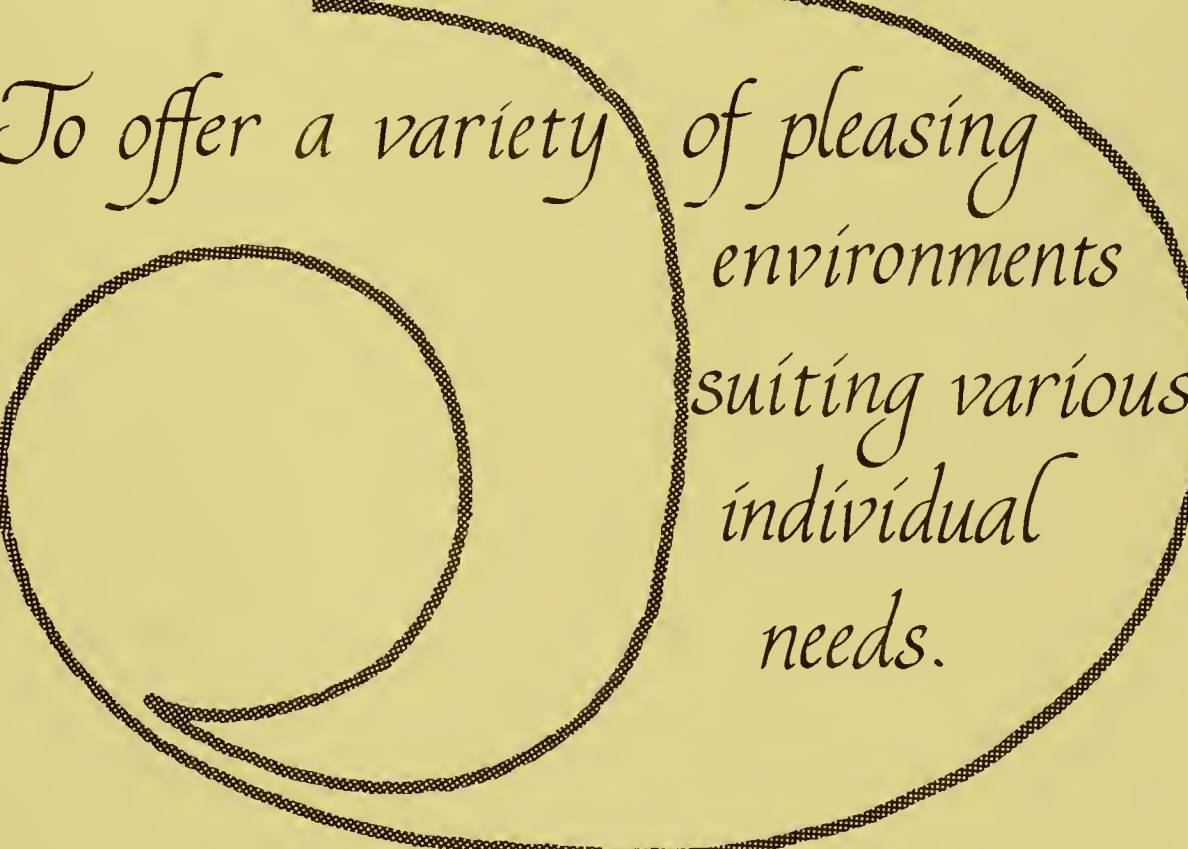
The implementation of this policy has and should be handled by the Landmarks Preservation Board in conjunction with the Department of City Planning.







*Goal:*



*To offer a variety of pleasing  
environments  
suiing various  
individual  
needs.*





URBAN DESIGN GOAL III: TO OFFER A VARIETY OF PLEASING  
ENVIRONMENTS SUITING VARIOUS  
INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

*The City must substitute concentrated urban variety for the extensive freedoms of rural life. Because of its intensity, the City necessarily restricts freedom of movement, privacy, and offers limited chances to enjoy nature. It must compensate for these limitations through the provision of an infinite variety of things to do and see, job opportunities, anonymity, and a variety of urban environments and settings for human activity. Without variety the City can become a trap, particularly for the less mobile: the very young, very old, and the poor. Environmental variety provides people with alternatives -- the chance to escape from daily concerns. Quiet residential streets can become oppressively dull without the contrast of active shopping, working, and recreational areas, serene parks counterpoint the often overwhelming energy of city life. Variety is essential because human needs are so varied from individual to individual, time to time.*

Objective A. To offer all citizens the possibility of living  
and working in an environment which they feel  
has desirable distinctive qualities.

Policies:

1. Each district of the City should offer a mixture of  
residential, commercial, and recreational activities.

The application and approach for carrying out this policy will be defined more clearly in urban design activities scheduled for selected districts of the City.

2. A variety of open spaces suited to the needs of different  
age groups and activity interests should be provided in  
each area of the City.

A major objective of the Urban Design Study is to explore ways for expanding open space and making better use of existing spaces for recreational and leisure purposes. Existing open spaces will be evaluated in order to propose priority projects for improving the recreation system. Open space criteria will be developed and applied in public programs to improve neighborhoods.



3. Differences in the character of activity centers in each community should be encouraged and enhanced by complementary public improvements.

Centers of activity along with variety in residential areas help determine the image of identity of a district. San Francisco is fortunate in having a rich cultural and environmental variety from one part of the City to another.

Any investment made in or near the various centers of activity -- commercial areas, community facilities -- should be designed to enhance existing character of topography, historical or cultural background associated with the district.

4. The streetscape should be interesting and attractive, with an emphasis on the abutting residential and other activities and not upon garages and endless breaks in the curb for autos.

Recent development trends producing blank, monotonous "garage door facades" run counter to the traditional street pattern of San Francisco. Where this kind of development is extended, the result is a dull, lifeless streetscape; when inserted in older traditional streets, it detracts from their pleasing qualities. The closely spaced curb cuts that rows of garage entrances require prohibit landscaping and street-tree planting in precisely those areas where needed most. The number of garage entrances a building may have should be restricted.

Objective B. To broaden the range of environmental settings in monotonous, homogeneous areas.

#### Policy

New patterns of physical development and new patterns of activity and open space should be encouraged in monotonous areas.

Some areas of the City are not unique in appearance because of a flat terrain and uniformly low building height. It is difficult to distinguish visually one part of the area from another; where one community terminates and another begins; how one gets to shopping areas, to major traffic routes, to other parts of the City and region.

... ..

Diversity and special character should be encouraged in these areas by developing visually accessible open spaces, by allowing and encouraging centers of contrasting building form, and where appropriate, by locating city-wide functions within the community.





*Goal:*

*To create a pleasing  
urban development  
harmonious  
with the city's  
significant  
views and natural setting.*



URBAN DESIGN GOAL IV: TO CREATE A PLEASING URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
HARMONIOUS WITH THE NATURAL SETTING  
AND SIGNIFICANT VIEWS OF THE CITY

*To be able to get away from the frantic, complicated involvement of urban life to a place where one can gain a new perspective on life -- perhaps to become inspired -- is a precious thing in the City. Hilltops with broad sweeping views, crashing waves along a rocky coastline, or the long views over the quiet water of the Bay and of passing ships offer unique opportunities in San Francisco. One of the most striking views, the one that delights visitor and resident alike, is the view of the City from across the water. This distinctive -- and fragile -- image of light-colored buildings cascading down the hills to the dark blue waters of the Bay and ocean, like other views of the City, can easily be lost: light-colored buildings replaced by dark and somber hues, finely textured buildings and slender towers by massive bulky forms. Once lost or damaged by thoughtless development, they cannot be restored. The preservation of our natural and man-made heritage is an essential prerequisite to the healthy growth and development of the City.*

Objective A. To use the City's natural setting and existing urban development to the greatest advantage.

Policies

1. Recreational opportunities of the waterfront and hilltops should be emphasized.

Many hilltops and slopes in the City are sparsely developed and many places on the waterfront inefficiently used. Locations such as these have value for recreational use. The views and sense of openness at these points extend the visual open space beyond the borders of the land involved.

The City could adopt specific development policies and programs for key sites in conjunction with area planning studies during the course of the urban design project. Means for preserving and developing these locations for public use should be explored, using such techniques as the purchase of scenic easements or changes in the Planning Code to require that public access be maintained.



2. New buildings projecting above surrounding development should be light in color to maintain the image of a "white city", contrasting with the dark water of the Bay and Ocean.

This policy and the following one refer primarily to large new buildings being developed in the downtown area and might imply Planning Code revision or a mandatory design review of building plans in designated areas -- a new procedure for the City.

3. New development should complement the mass and texture of existing, nearby development.

Objective B. To complement and protect the public and private views of the City.

#### Policies

1. New development should not block good views from important locations and public open spaces within the City.

To be operative, this policy could be made specific by establishing a limit on the height of new buildings around designated view points.

2. Views down streets with pleasing views should not be blocked by development within the street right of way.

There are many streets which provide a corridor framed by building forms with impressive views of water, hills, unique structures, and open spaces. Preservation of view corridors is an important policy with regard to street vacations which require the approval of the City Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

3. Development adjacent to and along the City's shores should not interrupt or detract from views of the Bay and Ocean or views of the City from across the water.

This is an important consideration in the development of specific shoreline policies and implies the need for low height limits along much of the shoreline.

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### III. REFINING AND USING GOALS

The purpose of the Urban Design Plan is to provide a basis for action that will move San Francisco toward the goals (preliminary) set forth in this report.

- I. To provide a safe, clean, and comfortable environment for all citizens.
- II. To provide a basis for individual orientation within the City.
- III. To offer a variety of pleasing environments suiting various individual needs.
- IV. To create a pleasing urban development harmonious with the natural setting and significant views of the City.

The goals are of equal importance. But the order in which they are presented reflects that, for many, the goal for a safe, clean, and comfortable environment must be basically satisfied before people can be concerned over orientation, variety, and beauty in the environment.

It should also be noted that the objectives and policies will provide guidelines to assess specific urban design recommendations for their contribution to the general goals.

Although the technique of developing criteria for measuring the significance of proposals has not been fully refined, setting objectives and policies is an important first step toward this essential planning function.

Finally, the appropriateness of these general goals, objectives, and policies -- as well as the suggested actions



The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the information received from the various sources.

For each source, the following information is provided:

(a) Name of the source

(b) Date of contact

(c) Nature of the information received

(d) Source's reliability

(e) Source's motivation

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(e) Source's motivation

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described -- will be tested periodically in the course of preparing the Urban Design Plan for the City. As new knowledge in practical application suggests adjustments, the current set of policies will be modified. Ultimately, the general policies will be incorporated into the final Urban Design Plan and into the Comprehensive Plan for the City.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

Would you take a few minutes longer to help us improve the statement of Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies presented in this report? On this page (or on your own stationery if you wish) please answer the following questions:

1. Are there any goals, objectives, or policies that you feel should be added? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which of the goals, objectives, and policies in this report do you think are most important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you change the wording -- to make it stronger, weaker, or more specific -- of any of the statements in this report? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In your opinion should any of the goals, objectives, and policies in this report be eliminated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please send your answers to:

Allan B. Jacobs, Director  
Department of City Planning  
100 Larkin Street  
San Francisco, California 94102

















